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Our Little Secrets

"Gay Adulterer"? Bush's Successor as Defender of Straight Marriage in Texas in Eye of Storm

By Alexander Cockburn

Late, February, President George W. Bush let the world know that if he were governor of Texas, he would insist that the sacred vows of holy matrimony could be exchanged only by a man and a woman, that he would press for a constitutional amendment insisting on this. At that very moment Austin, the state capital of Texas, was convulsed with charges that the current Republican governor's wife Anita Perry has been on the verge of suing her husband Rick Perry for divorce on the grounds of infidelity, said infidelity possibly being with someone of the same sex as Rick.

On one account Anita Perry has engaged the services of Becky Beaver, "the most notorious ballbreaker divorce attorney in Austin." On Tuesday, February 24, so we learn from our friend Michael King, city editor of the weekly Austin Chronicle, a small group of protesters (almost outnumbered by reporters and photographers) gathered at the Governor's Mansion for what was mockingly billed as a "support rally" under the theme, "It's OK to Be Gay." In a tolerant and forgiving world what Rick might or might not have done behind Anita's back, would be for him and Anita and maybe the other party to discuss, but

(**OLS** *continued on page 2*)

The Uproar Over Nader

By ALEXANDER COCKBURN and JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

Here's how a life-long, very radical organizer put it to us here at CounterPunch in the week after Nader announced he was entering the race.

"I have never voted for a Democrat for President and I don't intend to start now, but I want to beat Bush—I want to beat Bush more than I have ever wanted to beat any Republican.

"I support Nader's run, wholeheartedly, but at the same time I think that punishing Bush should be the main point of this election. At the end of the Roman Empire, sitting on the throne became a death sentence. You were sure to be gone soon. We can't dispatch our emperors in the same manner, but I am for impeaching all of them, one by one, as they take their turn at the helm. And, if the impeachment fails, deny everybody a second term.

"Vote now to punish Bush; four years hence, vote to punish Kerry. And so on. But I am not sure where that leaves me. Can a vote for Nader be a vote to punish Bush, or does it just split the vote against Bush? That can be argued, as Nader did in his declaratory speech.

"What is certain is this: the Nader campaign does not interfere with punishing Bush. Of course Nader should run, because he has an opportunity to talk to a lot of people about the Democratic-Republican one-party system. That might not be our main point in this election, but it is certainly a close second. And second place is important enough that it shouldn't be sacrificed to the first. It is not so important to punish Bush that we should sow illusions about the Democratic Party. Punishing Bush is not worth that. The best way to do both is to support Nader's campaign, but make some calculated judgement about who we should vote for at the very end of the game.

"Nader, then, is personally the reverse of what the liberals are saying—he is willing to sacrifice himself in order to get our position on the so-called two party system out there. He knows full well, that despite all the good his campaign will do, many people who agree with him, won't vote for him. His turn-out will be smaller than last time, he will be politically discounted for the rest of his life, ridiculed by some, laughed at by others, dismissed by most. He knows that. How could he not? Nonetheless, he honorably sacrifices himself so that there will be some national voice in this campaign reminding people that we are ruled by a two-headed monster, and warning them that cutting off one of the heads will do little more than give us the satisfaction of seeing that particular head roll.

"I didn't say Nader was selfless — selfless and selfish have nothing to do with it. I assume Nader is as much a mixture of ego, id, and superego as the next guy. The point is that politically Nader is making a calculated, major sacrifice. A noble act to cap a useful, courageous, political career.

"I am still a bit confused, The way people have always tried to convince me to vote for a Democrat is by threatening fascism. 'Fascism is around the corner, so better go with the Democrats.' Well, Bush is not fascism – the essence of which, señor Hobsbawm tells us, is the street mobilization of ordinary folks to enforce a right wing agenda. Bush and his cronies are not that. They want people to vote and to then go home, and stay home.

"But are Bush and his gang impor-

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(**OLS** *continued from page 1)*

our world is neither tolerant nor forgiving and there may be a hypocrisy issue here.

Last spring Perry endorsed and signed the "Defense of Marriage Act," a statement by the Texas legislature that it believes gay and lesbian Texans deserve fewer rights than other citizens. The Texas GOP's platform declares that "The party opposes the decriminalization of sodomy." Further diminishing the possibility of any ambiguity on this issue, the platform also declares that "The Party believes that the practice of sodomy tears at the fabric of society, contributes to the breakdown of the family unit, and leads to the spread of dangerous, communicable diseases. Homosexual behavior is contrary to the fundamental, unchanging truths that have been ordained by God, recognized by our country's founders, and shared by the majority of Texans." Perry approved the statement, and all candidates who run as Republicans in Texas have to sign it, or forfeit financial support by the party.

Now, when rumors swirl about the heads of Democrats, they soon get translated into print or broadcast word, as demonstrated by the speed with which rumors about a possible fling by John Kerry found a mass audience beyond the rough indiscretions of the internet. Republicans get softer treatment.

Michael King spends much of his story prudently insisting that he couldn't find a shred of evidence to substantiate the rumors about Perry. As the web-pamphleteer Jackson Thoreau (see his entertaining site www.geocities.com/jacksonthor/knowrsex.html, which is replete with scandal about the Bush clan) points out, "It is extremely difficult to find 'evidence' of extramarital affairs unless one party spills the beans or it comes out in a court divorce document. [Or, as happens from time to time in the UK, a newspaper stakes out the love nest and photographs the action.] In 2001, The Washington Post put two reporters to spy on former Democratic Maryland Gov. Parris Glendening, who was rumored to have had sex with Jennifer Crawford, his unmarried chief of staff, while he was separated from his wife. The Post reported in September, 2001 that Glendening eased out of Crawford's home early on a few mornings that summer.

"Remember that Crawford was unmarried and Glendening was separated. Has any media outlet devoted similar resources to try to catch Perry, who says he is committed to his wife? No. Can anyone recall the media catching a Republican in an affair through such an investigation?"

Back to Rick Perry. According to Thoreau, allegations about a gay side to the governor go back a long way. Thoreau also reports that there may be a court transcript or statement of facts in the Texas Court of Appeals that contains sworn testimony that former Waco Rep. Lane Denton had an encounter himself with Perry. Denton was found guilty in 1995 of diverting $67,201 from the Texas Department of Public Safety Officers Association while serving as its executive director in 1988-89. The money went to South Coast Associates, a public relations outfit formed by members of the Chrestia family. The whistleblower was Mary Holt, a DPSOA administrative employee who took her concerns to the board of directors. Denton's attorney raised the homosexuality issue by suggesting that Holt went to the board of directors out of pique with Denton because she was smitten with Chrestia, and that she had gotten the board's attention by telling them there was a "nest of queers" in their Austin office. Holt denied that motivation on the stand, saying that she and Chrestia were "best buddies," but she understood Chrestia was gay and Denton was his lover, and she was not romantically attracted to Chrestia.

At trial, the prosecutor asked John Chrestia whether he had been romantically involved with Denton, and Chrestia answered yes.

Denton was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment, but the trial judge had suspended imposition of sentence and placed Denton on "community supervision.".

Bush Rangers in NASCAR Country

By Jeffrey St Clair

In late January, Karl Rove took time out from prepping the President for his fateful encounter with Tim Russert to journey to Charlotte, North Carolina for a soiree at the palatial estate of Ken Thompson, CEO of Wachovia National Bank. Thompson, whose stock transactions in the merger of Wachovia and First Union banks, is an old friend of Rove and Bush's and is the top corporate evangelist for the administration's Faith-Based Initiatives.

When we said Thompson's house is palatial, we meant it: 24 rooms, plus 13 bathrooms. Thompson needed all that space for this event, where 75 of the richest families in the Tar Heel State mustered to hear Rove. The Machiavelli of Mayberry, as former Bush staffer John DiIulio called him, bragged about clipping Dean's wings and made a couple of jokes about North Carolina John Edwards. Here's a sample of Rovian humor: "'Why is it dangerous for Edwards to walk onto a construction site when plumbers are working?'" Rove asked. "Because they might connect the drain line to the wrong suer." It's an old joke and a bad one, but Rove knows his audience. Thus warmed up, Rove drove right to the point. It seems that the Bush campaign war chest, now stockpiled with $135 million, still has room to grow. Even though Bush is running unopposed in the North Carolina primary, Rove implored the assembled fat cats to commit to ponying up $50,000 apiece for the primary campaign, for a grand total of $3.75 million.

This beefy request elicited barely a murmur from the crowd. After all, they'd been there for Bush before. The same roster of bankers and insurance tycoons who now rule North Carolina had just chipped in $1.1 million at a Bush fundraiser in Winston-Salem in November. It's the NASCAR circuit. Wait until Bush makes a pit stop in Rockingham.

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Thompson, who has spent the night at the White House on two occasions, did ask Rove for a small favor in return. He said he would be a much more attractive proposition if the donors could have the opportunity to give Bush the checks in a face-to-face meeting. He reminded the president's political Svengali that North Carolina was "NASCAR country," the impermeable bedrock of the Bush fanatics. Rove grinned and said, "You name the place, I'll bring the president."

Ken Thompson's estate is big but not vast enough to host the kind of event he had in mind. So he rented the Charlotte Convention Center and sent out invitations to 2,000 of his dearest friends. For only $2,500 a plate, Thompson's invite noted, the diners would have a once-in-a-campaign season chance to sup with President Bush. The event, which was held on February 26, sold out faster than a Dixie Chicks concert.

When Bush landed in Charlotte, he was greeted by Jim Culbertson, retired president of Financial Computer Inc. in Winston-Salem and the statewide chairman for the Bush-Cheney campaign. Culbertson has told reporters about sending regular express mail packages to the Bush-Cheney campaign office in Arlington, Va.: "I have sent as much as $94,000, and I've sent as little as $18,000 or $19,000," he boasted to the Winston-Salem Journal.

Also pressing the flesh with Bush was James P. Cain, lawyer, lobbyist and former president and chief operating officer of the Carolina Hurricanes professional hockey club, Cain is a Bush Ranger, meaning that he has bundled more than $200,000 in campaign contributions for the president. and state vice chairman for the Bush-Cheney campaign. Cain, who co-founded the Raleigh office of Atlanta-based Kilpatrick Stockton law firm after joining the firm in the mid-1980s, lobbied for companies in highly regulated industries, including BellSouth, El Paso Energy, Frontier Energy and Southeastern Gas & Power.

Stanley Davis Phillips is also a Bush Ranger. Phillips is the president of an investment holding company with textile and furniture interests. In 2002, he was one of the hand-picked participants in the Bush administration's "Economic Forum" in Waco, Texas. His father is the late Earl N. Phillips, a former High Point mayor who launched enough furniture-related companies to be inducted into the American Furniture Hall of Fame. His brother, Earl Phillips Jr., was appointed by Bush as the Barbados-based ambassador to the Eastern Caribbean in 2002. He resigned the ambassadorship after 15 months in the wake of an IRS report that listed him among wealthy individuals who invested in dubious offshore tax shelters.

Rounding out the A-list was Dr. Aldona Z. Wos of Greensboro, a retired New York physician who chaired Women for Dole during Elizabeth Dole's successful 2002 U.S. Senate race. Another Bush Ranger, Wos, a native of Poland who has organized educational programs to recognize Christian victims of the World War II concentration camps, was appointed by Bush to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council and invited to the White House for a dinner honoring Polish President Alexander Kwasniewski.

While the Bush Rangers and Pioneers feasted with the president, a rambunctious group of protesters, organized by Democracy North Carolina, held signs reading "White House for Sale" and chanted ripe invectives at the parade of limousines as they pulled into and away from the convention center.

Bush was in and out of North Carolina in two hours. He huddled with the executives and took their money but had nothing to say to the workers of the state, who have been pulverized by his wrecking of the economy. Since Bush was selected president, North Carolina has lost more than 125,000 manufacturing jobs and the pace hasn't slacked.

The protesters outside the convention hall were also collecting canned food for the state's burgeoning ranks of the poor and the hungry. In North Carolina, 419,000 children live in poverty. One out of every five kids goes to sleep hungry.

"You can't eat faith," says Adam Sotak, the lead organizer for Democracy North Carolina. CP

(**NADER** *continued from page 1)*

tantly different in some other way? Do they represent an imperial agenda more dangerous than what the Demos offer? Are Cheney/ Perle/ Rumsfield different enough that we should, as they used to say, 'block' with the Democrats in the privacy of the voting booth, after we fully support Nader's campaign? Maybe. That maybe doesn't mean that Kerry is anything more than just an alternative imperial strategy. But if Cheney/Perle/Rumsfield have put us in Sharon's pocket, maybe, in the short run, an alternative imperial strategy would be different enough to vote for. I think there is an argument there. It is just that I don't like making it.

"I prefer to argue only that I want the satisfaction of wiping the smirk off the Boy Emperor's face. That's all. I want to see his head roll, just as Macheath wished that heavy axes would fall upon their faces. Then, after Bush's head plunks into the basket, we could turn our attention to the next guy on the throne.

"I fear I am slipping into darkness. Coming on as a tough guy to mask the bullshit of my position, which I guess could be summed up like this: Support Nader's campaign; vote for whomever you like."

"The point is that politically Nader is making a calculated, major sacrifice. A noble act to cap a useful, courageous, political career."

Now there's a thoughtful voice, but alas, one of the few to greet Nader's intervention with the consideration it deserves. In thirty years we have not seen and heard such hysteria and venom about Nader the saboteur, Nader the facilitator of fascism. People are frightened of Bush, more frightened than they should be, and fear is always ugly, just as it was when the liberals rushed out to red-bait and denounce the left in the McCarthy years.

Listening to Democrats screaming about Ralph Nader's entry into the presidential race we finally understand the mindset of those Communist dictatorships that used to take such trouble to ensure that the final count showed a 99 percent Yes vote for the Party's candidate. It's a totalitarian logic. "Anybody But Bush"

(**NADER** *continued on page 6)*

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Star Chamber Redux

The Persecution of Ernst Zundel

By Alan Cabal

In a cold cell in Toronto, Canada, a 64 year-old painter and pacifist sits on a fat stack of trial transcripts. On February 19, he marks his 365th day of solitary confinement. He's sitting on the transcripts because his jailers will not permit him to have a chair. He has no criminal record and has not been charged with a crime, and yet he wears the same orange jumpsuit as the murderers and rapists housed elsewhere in the prison. He is not permitted to confront or cross-examine his accusers in court. The "evidence" against him includes hearsay, double-hearsay, and triple-hearsay.

The object of the exercise is to deport this man to Germany, where he faces a five-year prison sentence for the crime of "defaming the dead". This man hasn't lived in Germany since he was 19 years old, and hasn't set foot in Germany for years. He emigrated to Canada in 1958, and in the year 2000 he moved to the United States to live quietly with his American wife in the rolling hills of Tennessee. There, he painted landscapes and still lifes in his studio and collected rare recordings of hymns and gospel music until he was hauled off one bright morning at about 11:00 a.m. in front of God and everybody and whisked to Canada by American law enforcement officials. His name is Ernst Zundel, and he is the world's premier thought-criminal.

Ernst Zundel is the most widely recognized figure in the growing number of historians, both amateur and academic, questioning orthodox accounts of the events which took place in the Nazi concentration camps during World War II, specifically with reference to the number of Jewish dead and how they died. He has been put through the Canadian legal system before on this issue. In 1984 he was charged with "spreading false news" under an obscure 700 year-old law imported to Canada from England intended to deter wandering minstrels from mocking the aristocracy. It had been used only twice before in Canada. That trial was focused on a publication, "Did Six Million Really Die?" Zundel didn't write it, he merely published it, but that was enough. That trial was in 1985 and lasted seven weeks. He lost that trial, but the verdict was overturned on appeal when it was determined that the judge was biased.

The second trial was on the same charges, but this time Zundel commissioned the forensic examination known as the Leuchter Report, which alleged that industrial-scale gassings of human beings could not have happened. He lost that trial as well, but was exonerated in 1992 when Canada's Supreme Court ruled the "False News Law" unconstitutional and struck it from the books. This 4-3 ruling held that minorities have the right to state their own opinions, "even if the majority regards them as wrong or false".

In 1996 the Canadian Human Rights Commission initiated a "Human Rights Tribunal" against him which dragged on for five years. This trial centered on the "Zundelsite" (www.zundelsite.org), a website based in the US and owned and operated by Ingrid Rimland, a US citizen.

No other historical narrative is possessed of an orthodoxy protected by law.

"Ernst was believed to be the mastermind who controlled me", she explains. "This trial's purpose was twofold: one, to bankrupt Ernst financially by stringing out the hearings, and two, to force him to shut down the website. Knowing he wouldn't and couldn't do that, the plan was to charge and imprison him with contempt of court–in other words, criminalization by the back door to facilitate deportation to Germany.

"I flew from San Diego to Toronto in 1996 and offered on the very first day when court opened to testify that it was my website, but was not allowed to do so. We were not married then. Ernst lost that trial as well. One of the many bizarre rulings of that trial was that 'truth is not a defense' — only the feelings of an aggrieved and threatened 'minority' count. The Tribunal ruled in 2001 against Ernst, but stated in its summary that it was a 'symbolic' ruling, since the Zundelsite was an American website and could not be shut down by Canada."

Zundel has been physically assaulted in numerous ways on numerous occasions. These assaults included beatings, booby-trapped mailings, a bomb that exploded in his garage in 1984, another bomb sent through the post 11 years later, and an arson attack which destroyed his home and its contents. He has never been convicted of a crime and in no way does he promote violence or hatred of any kind in his work. His only "crime" is that of questioning historical events.

Zundel was arrested at his home in rural Tennessee by local authorities last year and handed over to the INS, ostensibly for missing an interview with immigration officials and "overstaying his visa." In fact, no such violation occurred. He was notified of an interview scheduled for June 12, 2001. His attorney at that time couldn't make the interview and requested a rescheduling, a routine request which is almost always routinely granted. He received no reply. The attorney sent another letter again requesting a rescheduling on May 6, 2002. Again there was no reply. Zundel's American wife, Ingrid Rimland, has the return receipt verifying that the letter was, in fact, delivered to the INS. The agency claims to have no record of either letter.

The couple never abandoned Zundel's Adjustment Of Status application, nor were they ever informed that it had been considered abandoned. They had been advised by INS that the procedure could take as long as three years, and that no status check would be allowed.

"When Ernst was arrested", Ms. Rimland explains, "we were prevented from calling a lawyer. A Warrant for Deportation lay ready in Knoxville and was signed and dated after the arrest. In the room where this was done, a poster with the Star of Israel was posted prominently on the wall.

"Through the Freedom of Information Act — some 30 pages withheld for 'security reasons' — we found out that some

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coded messages had been faxed on the very day of our first scheduled appointment between US Immigration and Canadian Immigration. Who in Canada was interested in causing us grief that day? A good place to start would be to check into some non-profit outfits that are fattening themselves on the taxpayers' trough by shrieking 'Hate!' for gain.

"After Ernst was arrested, we immediately applied for habeas corpus. We were turned down by a judge within hours in a one-sentence ruling. Not even our attorney was allowed to speak up. We appealed to the Sixth Circuit Appeal Court. Within days we were turned down again, this time in a one-paragraph ruling. Through FOIA we found out that there was ex parte communication prior to this ruling between a clerk who has a Jewish-sounding name and an immigration official who was exceedingly nasty to me when I tried to find out where my husband had been taken, and why. I understand it is illegal for court officials to solicit information on a pending court case behind the judge's and the accused's backs."

On June 17, 2003, accompanied by two INS officers, Ernst Zundel was deported to Canada by plane.

"On that very day," states Ms. Rimland, "Germany swore out an arrest warrant. Why on that day? Who notified them, and on what grounds? An impartial judge could surely find out by requesting the missing FOIA pages.

"Through various documents and private sources, some at the highest levels of Germany's government, we learned that the original covert plan had been to get Ernst shipped to Germany, where 'insulting the memory of the dead' is on the books as a criminal offense, and where a 5 year sentence is a foregone conclusion for so-called 'Holocaust Denial.' Whoever masterminded this kidnapping evidently didn't know that the US always deports back to the country of entry, not to the country of nationality. Ernst ended up in Canada, and Canadian taxpayers are now stuck with the bill."

Zundel applied for political asylum on the grounds that it was a certainty that he was facing prison in Germany for his historical inquiries. In 1992, after numerous appeals following the "Second Great Holocaust Trial", as it came to be known in revisionist circles, the highest court in Canada had ruled that Mr. Zundel had the right to speak his mind and express his views as he saw fit, "…even if the majority regards them as wrong or false", as the court phrased it.

His adversaries came up with a solution. Two Ministers of the Canadian Parliament decided that Zundel might be a "terrorist". A "Security Certificate" was sworn out. This instrument is the only method by which Ernst could be deported to Germany, as he would otherwise be fully qualified for asylum in Canada, where he lived as a law-abiding permanent resident for 42 years. The quality of the evidence presented against him often goes like this:

"Mr. Zundel allegedly had 'sporadic contacts' with a now-dead U.S. based white supremacist named William Pierce. Pierce wrote a book called 'The Turner Diaries'. Timothy McVeigh loved 'The Turner Diaries', which supposedly describes a bombing similar to the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, for which McVeigh was convicted."

Note that the date, time, place, and nature of these "contacts" between Zundel and Pierce go unspecified, nor is there any suggestion that Zundel had anything to do with the authorship of the infamous Turner Diaries. There is no assertion or evidence that Zundel had any contact with McVeigh. It's all innuendo intended to link Zundel to violence and terrorism.

Here's a pertinent excerpt from a Factum filed with the Court of Appeal for Ontario on January 21 by Mr. Zundel's legal counsel, Peter Lindsay and Chi-Kun Shi:

"Information and/or evidence has been secretly presented to Mr. Justice Blais in the absence of Mr. Zundel and his counsel, which information and/or evidence may be used according to the Act to determine both whether Mr. Zundel should continue to be detained and whether the issuing of the Certificate was reasonable. Where secret information and/or evidence has been presented to Mr. Justice Blais, sometimes a summary has been given to Mr. Zundel and his counsel and sometimes no summary of the information and/or evidence has been made available to Mr. Zundel and his counsel, even though the information and/or evidence may be used according to the Act both to determine whether Mr. Zundel should continue to be detained and whether the issue of the Certificate is reasonable.

"It is a fundamental principle of our adversarial system that one party presents its case fully and then the other party responds, knowing the case it has to meet. What has happened in this case is that after the Minister and Solicitor General presented their case and while Mr. Zundel was in the middle of presenting his response, the Minister and Solicitor General have secretly presented more of a case against Mr. Zundel. The additional case being presented is not limited to reply evidence. It is not limited at all. The case can secretly change in any way while being responded to. Mr. Zundel and his counsel do not know if it has changed in this case. Neither does this Honorable Court. It is not an overstatement to say that this is completely contrary to the fundamental principles of our judicial system"

No other historical narrative is possessed of an orthodoxy protected by law. It is in the nature of history to be subject to review and revision. The surest way to interest people in a field of inquiry or study is to prohibit it. The "Holocaust Industry", as Norman Finkelstein dubbed it, behaves in every way like a fanatical cult. The persecution of Ernst Zundel has been and continues to be both relentless and utterly ruthless. This most recent and ongoing episode flies in the face of a thousand years of Anglo-Saxon law. The man may hold provocative views, but he is a committed pacifist. He is guilty only of expressing an unpopular viewpoint. For him to be held in solitary confinement without having even been charged with a crime and without bail for a year while the court proceeds against him in some hideous replica of a Star Chamber or something out of Lewis Carroll is an affront to justice and public decency that goes far beyond anything that Mr. Zundel has to say. CP

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(**NADER** *continued from page 3*)

chorus the Democrats. But they don't mean that. They mean, "Nobody But Kerry".

What they're saying is that no one has the right to challenge Bush but a Democrat, whoever that Democrat might be, no matter what that Democrat stands for.

The stream of abuse at Nader, a man who has toiled unceasingly for the public good for half a century has been childishly vulgar and vitriolic. Nader is a "faded chanteuse in a dingy nightclub," wrote Robert Scheer venerable liberal pundit for the Los Angeles Times. He should know. What has Nader done since 2000, asked Scheer scornfully, albeit stupidly. As Jim Ridgeway points out in the Village Voice, It's been Nader and his groups, not the Democrats, who've spearheaded universal health care ever since Hillary Clinton botched the chance for health reform in the early 90s. It's been Nader and his troops who've kept the searchlight on corporate crime, who raised the hue and cry on Enron, when Democrats were smoothing the counterpane for Lay in the Lincoln Bedroom.

From the point of view of democracy, the American political system is a shambles of corruption, gerrymandered to ensure that it is almost impossible to evict any sitting member of the House of Representatives. The presidential debates are fixed to exclude unwelcome intruders. Nader says that in the whole of his 2000 challenge he got about 3 minutes face-time on the major networks. You can understand why the two major parties don't want any outsider spoiling the fun. They arranged things that way, as Nader understands, and explains better than anyone.

"I think the mistake the Democrats are making" said Nader at the National Press Club on Monday, February 23, " when they use the mantra 'anybody but Bush' is, first of all, it closes their mind to any alternative strategies or any creative thinking, which is not good for a political party. And second, it gives their ultimate nominee no mandate, no constituency, no policies, if the ultimate nominee goes into the White House.

"And then they'll be back to us. I guarantee you the Democrats, the liberal groups, the liberal intelligentsia, the civic groups that are now whining and complaining, even though they know they're being shut out increasingly, year after year, from trying to improve their country when they go to work every day. And they'll be saying, 'Oh, you can't believe — we were betrayed. The Democrats are succumbing to the corporate interests in the environment, consumer protection.'

House districts are gerrymandered so that it is almost impossible to evict any sitting member of Congress.

"How many cycles do we have to go through here? How long is the learning curve before we recognize that political parties are the problem? They're the problem! They're the ones who have turned our government over to the corporations, so they can say no to universal health insurance and no to a living wage and no to environmental sanity and no to renewable energy and no to a whole range of issues that corporations were never allowed to say no to 30, 40, 50 years ago. Things really have changed."

Nader's seen it happen time and again. Bold promises from a Democratic candidate, followed by ignominious collapse. And each time the promises are vaguer, more timid. Each time the whole system tilts further in the direction of corporate power. Nader is saying that the Democrats are so hopelessly compromised that they don't know how to energize people to get them into the polling booths to vote against Bush. So he's going to lend a hand. Nader can be the candidate denouncing the war that Bush started and Kerry voted for. Nader can denounce the corporate slush that's given Bush his hundred million dollar war chest and Kerry his $30 million in corporate swag.

With NBK as their war cry ("Nobody But Kerry") we doubt the Democrats have much of a shot at the White House. Already George Bush has winged Mr Facing-Both-Ways pretty good. Kerry looks like an uncertain proposition to us. If we were advising him, or John Edwards for that matter, we'd push for a joint press conference with Nader, welcome him into the race, hail him as a man who knows what's wrong with America and how to mend it. That would make for an exciting political year, and a pretty good chance of ousting George Bush. CP

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